

WHAT IS DAWN

DAWN is a network of over 250 hospitals that provides data on drug-related emergency department (ED) visits to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). DAWN tracks *all* types of drug-related ED visits, including *adverse reactions to pharmaceuticals, nonmedical use of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, illegal drug use, suicide attempts, underage alcohol use, and accidental poisonings*. Westat, a research firm based in Rockville, MD, collects the data on behalf of SAMHSA.

DAWN provides a picture of the impact of drug use, misuse and abuse on selected metropolitan areas and across the Nation. DAWN works with local, State, and Federal substance abuse and public health agencies to both meet their data needs and to learn about their priorities.

HOW ARE THE DATA USED

DAWN data are used by diverse audiences in government and the private sector to:

- Plan public health policy
- Develop public health programs
- Obtain grant support to address local drug-related problems
- Improve patient care and allocation of resources in participating hospitals.

The data are available to the public through publications and the DAWN website. For member hospitals, Federal partners, and other designated users, SAMHSA makes DAWN data available as soon as it is submitted through DAWN *Live!*, a secure, Internet-based system.

WHO ARE THE USERS

Federal Agencies

The **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** has used DAWN data for many years to assess the abuse potential of prescription drugs and assist in scheduling and labeling decisions. For example, the FDA Advisory Committee on Anesthetic and Life Support Drugs used DAWN findings to understand the misuse of prescription opiate pain relievers, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, fentanyl, and morphine. They used this information to advise the FDA on how to better control the abuse of sustained-release opioids. The DAWN data are an important resource for FDA's post-marketing surveillance. They rely on DAWN to identify adverse reactions and other health consequences of prescription and OTC drugs approved for the market.

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** uses DAWN data to monitor adverse reactions to flu vaccine. This information will help them be prepared in the event of a flu pandemic. CDC researchers are also using DAWN to track mortality caused by the misuse of prescription opiates.

The **White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)** uses DAWN to assess progress and pinpoint problems in controlling drug abuse in the U.S. For example, ONDCP looked to DAWN for trends in prescription drug abuse, particularly pain relievers and anti-anxiety drugs, before announcing a new initiative to address prescription drug abuse.

SAMHSA, DAWN's sponsor, uses DAWN data to track changing patterns of drug abuse and to monitor buprenorphine, a new treatment for opiate addiction that is regulated by SAMHSA.

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"We are pleased that DAWN can give us metro area data, as well as center city information. We want to intervene early with prevention and treatment services."

— *Public Health Practitioner*

Who Uses DAWN Data

Communities

DAWN data provides information on potential public health problems to state and local public health agencies and to community groups. These include *underage drinking, adverse reactions to medications in the elderly, accidental poisonings among young children, and the misuse of prescription drugs by all ages.*

DAWN data can help local agencies assess the need for public health resources and detect emerging drug problems before they become widespread. For example, a health department on the West Coast used DAWN data to assess the relationship between methamphetamine abuse and an increase in syphilis cases.

“We have been using DAWN to track ED visits involving methamphetamine, which appear to be associated with HIV/AIDS cases in our city.”

— Epidemiologist

Member Hospitals

DAWN provides members immediate access to their own data through **DAWN Live!**—a secure Internet-based system. With these data, hospitals can educate the community and work with public health authorities to address problems related to the use of drugs.

Physicians, nurses, and other hospital staff can use DAWN Live! to monitor drug-related cases seen in their ED, recognize sentinel events, and increase staff training in response to such cases.

Hospital managers can use their DAWN data to help allocate resources and staffing to respond to changing caseloads.

Pharmaceutical Industry

Pharmaceutical firms use DAWN data to track the use, misuse, and abuse of their products. Increasingly, the FDA is requiring pharmaceutical firms to incorporate DAWN in their post-marketing surveillance plans.

For more information: If you have questions, please call Westat at **800-FYI-DAWN**. Information about DAWN is also available online at <http://DAWNinfo.samhsa.gov>.